

Attendance Network Meeting

29th September 2026

City of BRADFORD METROPOLITAN DISTRICT COUNCIL

CHILDREN | FAMILIES | THRIVING COMMUNITIES

Attendance Network

Today's Agenda

1. **Attendance Updates**
2. **Educational Neglect**
3. **Information Sharing**
4. **Working Together to Improve Levels of Severe Absence**
   Co-producing Bradford's developing approach with schools



Attendance remains everybody's business.

CHILDREN | FAMILIES | THRIVING COMMUNITIES

School Attendance in Bradford

2025/26 Update

Working together for better attendance, brighter futures

Attend
TO LEARN

Belong
TO THRIVE

Achieve
A BRIGHTER FUTURE



City of BRADFORD
METROPOLITAN DISTRICT COUNCIL

Stronger Schools Brighter Bradford

BRADFORD ATTENDANCE NETWORK

Attendance remains everybody's business.

BRADFORD 2025
UK City of Culture

CHILDREN | FAMILIES | THRIVING COMMUNITIES

City of BRADFORD METROPOLITAN DISTRICT COUNCIL

Where Are We Now?

School attendance in Bradford 2025/26

(published DfE figures)

Stronger Schools Brighter Bradford

91.79%
Attendance

8.21%
Overall Absence

24.06%
Persistent Absence

Measure	Bradford	England
Attendance	91.79%	93.07%
Overall Absence	8.21%	6.93%
Persistent Absence	24.06%	19.05%

Key message

Bradford remains below national levels but continues to improve.

Between 2022/23 and 2024/25 Bradford reduced absence and persistent absence faster than England, Yorkshire & Humber and statistical neighbours.

BRADFORD ATTENDANCE NETWORK

Attendance remains everybody's business.



CHILDREN | FAMILIES | THRIVING COMMUNITIES

Where does absence sit?

Secondary remains the biggest challenge

(working count 2025/26)

Phase	Attendance	Persistent absence	Severe absence
Primary	94.21%	15.90%	0.91%
Secondary	89.13%	30.30%	5.20%
Special schools	85.60%	40.11%	7.57%
Alternative provision	65.77%	81.32%	26.37%

City of BRADFORD METROPOLITAN DISTRICT COUNCIL



Key points

- Secondary pupils make up **44%** of the cohort
- But account for **58%** of persistent absence
- And **77%** of severe absence

BRADFORD ATTENDANCE NETWORK

Attendance remains everybody's business.

BRADFORD 2025 UK City of Culture

City of BRADFORD METROPOLITAN DISTRICT COUNCIL

Stronger Schools Brighter Bradford

4 The year group story

Persistent absence rises through secondary school

(working count 2025/26)





24.1%
persistent absence in Year 7

33.9%
persistent absence in Year 11

Key message

The attendance challenge grows as children move through secondary school, with Year 11 showing the highest levels of persistent absence.

Attendance remains everybody's business.

BRADFORD 2025 UK City of Culture

City of BRADFORD METROPOLITAN DISTRICT COUNCIL



5 Understanding vulnerability

Some groups experience significantly higher absence

(working count 2025/26)

FSM eligible

35.58%

persistent absence

(vs 15.47% for non-FSM)

SEN support

32.01%

persistent absence

EHC plan

40.29%

persistent absence

Mainstream secondary (EHC plan)

49.46%

persistent absence

Attendance: **75.92%**

Severe absence: **20.84%**

Key message

Children with additional needs and those eligible for free school meals face the greatest barriers to regular attendance. Mainstream secondary pupils with an EHC plan are a key area of focus.

Attendance remains everybody's business.

BRADFORD 2025 UK City of Culture

CHILDREN | FAMILIES | THRIVING COMMUNITIES

City of BRADFORD METROPOLITAN DISTRICT COUNCIL

6 What we're doing and what we need from schools

A shared approach for 2026/27



Our attendance improvement programme

SEND & Attendance Framework

- Joint planning
- Better support around unmet need
- Focus on mainstream secondary

Attendance & Early Help Framework

- One family
- One plan
- One lead professional
- Earlier support for families

Severe Absence Programme

- 1,683 pupils identified for active follow-up
- Termly monitoring
- Targeting Support Meetings
- Home visiting where engagement is low

What we need from schools

- Prioritise severe absence
- Engage with Targeting Support Meetings
- Use Early Help where barriers sit beyond school
- Ensure SEND barriers are understood before escalation
- Work with us on a coordinated district approach

BRADFORD ATTENDANCE NETWORK

Attendance remains everyone's business.

Together we can help every child to learn, belong and achieve.

Together for brighter futures



CHILDREN | FAMILIES | THRIVING COMMUNITIES

City of BRADFORD METROPOLITAN DISTRICT COUNCIL

6 What we're doing and what we need from schools

A shared approach for 2026/27



Our attendance improvement programme

SEND & Attendance Framework

- Joint planning
- Better support around unmet need
- Focus on mainstream secondary

Attendance & Early Help Framework

- One family
- One plan
- One lead professional
- Earlier support for families

Severe Absence Programme

- 1,683 pupils identified for active follow-up
- Termly monitoring
- Targeting Support Meetings
- Home visiting where engagement is low

What we need from schools

- Prioritise severe absence
- Engage with Targeting Support Meetings
- Use Early Help where barriers sit beyond school
- Ensure SEND barriers are understood before escalation
- Work with us on a coordinated district approach

BRADFORD ATTENDANCE NETWORK

Attendance remains everyone's business.

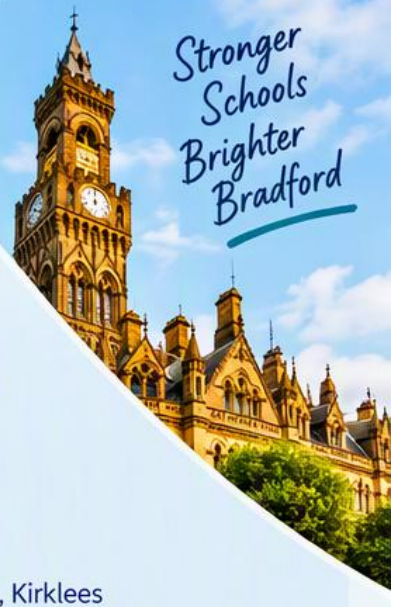
Together we can help every child to learn, belong and achieve.

Together for brighter futures



CHILDREN | FAMILIES | THRIVING COMMUNITIES

City of BRADFORD METROPOLITAN DISTRICT COUNCIL



7 RISE Attendance & Behaviour Hubs

Registrations now open for the January 2027 cohort

A school-led programme, bringing schools together to tackle shared attendance and behaviour challenges.

Partner schools will benefit from:

High-impact online CPD delivered by experts

92% rated useful in last year's cohort

Exclusive in-person open day visits to lead schools

Honest, solution-focused collaboration with other schools in the region

What schools say

"Inspirational"

"The most useful training we have received"

Feedback from previous participants

Run by schools, for schools

Creating opportunities to share effective practice, learn from one another and drive sustainable improvement.

Our lead schools in Yorkshire and the Humber

- Carr Manor Community School, Leeds
- Corpus Christi Catholic Primary School, Leeds
- Dixons Trinity and King's Academies, Bradford
- Edlington Victoria Academy, Doncaster
- Horizon Community College, Barnsley
- Moor End Academy, Kirklees
- Royd's Hall, A SHARE Academy, Kirklees
- Spring Grove Junior, Infant and Nursery School, Kirklees
- St John's CofE Primary School, Bradford
- The Laurel Academy, Doncaster
- Willows Academy, North East Lincolnshire

Expression of Interest Form Link

Register your interest

If your school is interested in joining the January 2027 cohort, please complete the Expression of Interest Form by **6 November 2026.** A member of the team will then be in touch with next steps.

To ensure you do not miss further communications, please add **YH.ABHMAILBOX@education.gov.uk** as a safe sender.

BRADFORD ATTENDANCE NETWORK

Attendance remains everybody's business.

BRADFORD 2025 UK City of Culture

City of BRADFORD METROPOLITAN DISTRICT COUNCIL



7 Modified (Part-Time) Timetables

Key information for schools

All pupils are entitled to a full-time education

Modified timetables should only be used in exceptional circumstances, where they are in a pupil's best interests, are time-limited, and form part of a planned programme of support and reintegration.

Working together to improve school attendance

Key clarification

Bradford Council receives attendance data directly from schools and is therefore able to identify when attendance code **C2** (temporary part-time timetable) is being used.

- Schools **do not require Local Authority approval** before implementing a temporary modified timetable.
- Schools are **not required** to **notify the** Local Authority solely because a pupil has been placed on a modified timetable.
- Schools should continue to **record** attendance correctly and maintain appropriate documentation, risk assessments and review arrangements in line with local guidance.

When schools should notify Bradford Council

Complete and submit **Form MT1** and associated documentation where a pupil on a modified timetable:

- Has an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP).
- Is undergoing an EHC Needs Assessment.
- Is a Child in Need.
- Is subject to a Child Protection Plan.
- Is a Child Looked After.
- Has an allocated Social Worker.

These cohorts are identified because the Local Authority has additional statutory responsibilities in relation to SEND, safeguarding and vulnerable children.

Further guidance

Schools should ensure they are familiar with Bradford's current guidance on modified timetables, including:

- Parental consent
- Risk assessments
- Reviews
- Reintegration planning

Full guidance is available here:

Modified / Part-Time Timetables

https://bso.bradford.gov.uk/content/modified-part-time-timetables

Attendance remains everybody's business.

BRADFORD 2025 UK City of Culture

City of BRADFORD METROPOLITAN DISTRICT COUNCIL

Stronger Schools Brighter Bradford

7 Strengthening the Consideration of SEND Prior to Legal Action

A support-first approach

Understanding the link between SEND and attendance

Bradford continues to see cases where attendance concerns may be linked to a child's identified or emerging SEND. Attendance interventions should be underpinned by a thorough understanding of any SEND-related barriers before legal action is considered. Schools should ensure they have fully explored, assessed and responded to any SEND needs that may be impacting attendance, in line with Bradford's staged attendance intervention approach.

Attendance should not be viewed in isolation

Poor attendance can sometimes be a symptom of unmet need, anxiety, communication difficulties, sensory differences, social and emotional needs, difficulties with transitions, or challenges accessing the curriculum.

A whole-child approach

Where these factors may be relevant, schools should be able to demonstrate that they have taken reasonable and proportionate steps to understand and address those barriers.

Further guidance

Bradford's attendance intervention framework provides additional information:

Poor Attendance Interventions
https://bso.bradford.gov.uk/content/education-safeguarding/attendance/poor-attendance-interventions

Before requesting legal action, schools should be able to evidence:

1. Consideration of whether the child has an EHCP, receives SEND Support, or may have emerging SEND needs.
2. Meaningful discussions with the child and family to understand barriers to attendance.
3. Appropriate assessment, review and graduated SEND support.
4. Reasonable adjustments made to support attendance and engagement.
5. Consideration of referrals to, or involvement from, relevant support services.
6. Regular review of the impact of interventions and support offered.
7. Clear attempts to engage parents and carers where engagement has been limited.

Attendance remains everybody's business.

BRADFORD 2025 UK City of Culture

City of BRADFORD METROPOLITAN DISTRICT COUNCIL

Stronger Schools Brighter Bradford

7 Strengthening the Consideration of SEND Prior to Legal Action

Support, information and next steps

2 of 2

Examples of support schools may wish to consider

Depending on the individual needs of the child, support may include:

- Adjustments to the school day, routines or transitions.
- Access to a trusted adult, mentor or key worker.
- Enhanced pastoral support.
- Sensory or environmental adjustments.
- Review of behaviour, inclusion or support plans.
- SEN Support planning and review meetings.
- Early Help or Team Around the Family arrangements.
- Involvement of SEND, Educational Psychology, health or other partner services.
- Short-term, outcome-focused interventions aimed at addressing specific barriers to attendance.

Ensure all interventions are clearly recorded and reviewed, with evidence of their impact and any subsequent actions taken.

Additional information required on legal action requests

To support robust decision-making, all requests for legal action should clearly state whether the child:

- Has an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP).
- Receives SEND Support.
- Is currently being assessed for SEND.

Schools should also provide:

- A brief summary of the child's identified or suspected needs.
- How those needs are believed to impact attendance.
- The support and reasonable adjustments implemented by the school.
- The actions taken to engage and support the family.
- Any involvement from SEND, health or other professionals.

Where support has been offered but not engaged with by the family, schools should evidence the attempts made to secure that engagement.

Key message

> **"Have we fully understood and responded to any SEND-related barriers to attendance, and can we evidence the support we have provided to both the child and their family?"**

Providing this information at the point of referral will help ensure that legal interventions are targeted appropriately and that Bradford's attendance strategy continues to reflect a **support-first approach**, particularly for children with identified or emerging SEND needs.

Further guidance

Full guidance can be found within Bradford's attendance intervention framework:

Poor Attendance Interventions
https://bso.bradford.gov.uk/content/education-safeguarding/attendance/poor-attendance-interventions

Attendance remains everybody's business.

BRADFORD 2025 UK City of Culture

CHILDREN | FAMILIES | THRIVING COMMUNITIES

8 Penalty Notice Portal Training

With a look at E-LOA forms too

Tuesday 10 November 2026 **11:00am | Microsoft Teams**

BRADFORD
ATTENDANCE NETWORK

Stronger Schools Brighter Bradford

Who should attend?

- Staff who submit or manage penalty notice requests
- Experienced portal users who need an annual refresher
- Colleagues who have not attended previous training
- Staff who want an update on E-LOA forms

Book your place

Scan the QR code to register and receive the Teams link.

Why attend?

An essential refresher for existing users, as well as an introduction for colleagues who are new to the portal.

Can't attend live? Information and the recording of last year's training are available on Bradford Schools Online.

bso.bradford.gov.uk/content/education-safeguarding/attendance/penalty-notices-august24

Attendance remains everybody's business.



Kate Hopton

Head of Service – Education Safeguarding and Admissions

City of BRADFORD METROPOLITAN DISTRICT COUNCIL

Educational Neglect

1 DEFINITION

The Department for Education (DfE) states 'persistent failure to send children to school is a clear sign of neglect'. The NSPCC cites 'failure to ensure regular school attendance which prevents the child reaching their full potential academically' as one of their six forms of neglect.

Working Together to Safeguard Children and case law is clear that 'a failure to provide suitable education is capable of satisfying the significant harm test', whether the child is on a school roll or not.

2 WHY IT MATTERS

Educational neglect, persistent and severe absence are recurring themes in Safeguarding Practice Reviews. In contrast, regular school attendance is a protective factor for the most vulnerable children and young people, providing opportunities for support whilst giving them the best possible start in life.

Poor attendance increases the risks of children:

- not meeting their academic potential and underachieving
- becoming NEET (not in employment, education or training)
- being victims of harm, abuse or exploitation
- becoming involved in criminal or gang-related activity



3 WHAT THE DATA TELLS US

There is a demonstrable link between absence and outcomes at the end of KS2 and KS4.

Both National and Bradford data indicate a significant rise in the numbers of pupils classified as persistent absentees (attendance less than 90%) and severe absentees (attendance less than 50%) when compared to pre-pandemic levels.

Children who are being home educated is an increasing but unstable cohort; hundreds of children become home educated and return to school each year in the Bradford District

4 INDICATORS / WARNING SIGNS

- Being absent from school regularly or for long periods of time
- Not being provided with suitable home education if not on a school roll
- Falling behind age-related expectations
- Parents failing to maintain or secure provision
- Failing to engage in school meetings
- Failing to provide reasons for absences
- Not engaging in interventions to improve attendance
- Failing to prevent children becoming PA or SA
- Child 'refusal' to attend

5 THINGS TO CONSIDER

- Are the child's educational development needs being met?
- Are learning needs being addressed so learning and progress can be seen appropriate to identified needs?
- Are there aspects of the provision that are impacting negatively on the educational development of the child?
- Is a full-time education offer in place?
- Has each child in a family had an application made for a school place or has a parental decision to Electively Home Educate been made?
- Have other teams/agencies who may be able to support a young person been notified e.g. health or SEND?

6 ACTIONS / NEXT STEPS

- Consider the significance of educational neglect if you become aware of persistent and/or severe absence from school.
- Demonstrate Professional curiosity in relation to children not in school including those who are not on a school roll.
- Challenge parents and carers as to why children are not in/attending school.
- Consider how you and others might resolve the absence from school.
- Seek advice from the child's school or the Education Safeguarding Team.
- Refer to the Working Together to Improve School Attendance document and EHE Guidelines for LAs

7 HOW TO SUPPORT OR REPORT CONCERNS

Poor Attendance - Staged Intervention Process | Bradford Schools Online

Children's Initial Contact Point on 01274 433999

Education Safeguarding Team Tel: 01274 437043

Elective Home Education Team 01274 439340

Education Access Team 01274 439393

BRADFORD 2025
UK City of Culture

Information Sharing: What's changed?

Key updates from the DfE statutory guidance (September 2026)

Working together for safer, brighter futures

Why the change?



The Children's Wellbeing and Schools Act 2026 introduced a statutory information sharing duty (section 16LA of the Children Act 2004).

The updated DfE guidance (September 2026) provides clarity on what and when information should be shared to help safeguard and promote the welfare of children.

The bigger picture



Who does the duty apply to?



The information sharing duty applies to organisations in England, including:

- Local authorities
- Integrated Care Boards and NHS Trusts
- The police
- Education (including schools and colleges)
- Early years providers
- Prison and probation services, youth justice services and youth custody services
- GPs, dentists and other primary care providers

It also applies to designated childcare or education agencies and providers delivering services on behalf of these organisations.

Key changes at a glance

Previous position	Now (from 30 September 2026)
Uncertainty about when information could be shared, often linked to specific statutory thresholds.	Clear statutory duty to share information where it may help another organisation's relevant functions – no specific threshold is required.
Inconsistency between organisations and practitioners.	Clearer, consistent expectations across sectors.
Misunderstood barriers (e.g. data protection, consent, confidentiality) led to information being withheld.	Guidance provides clarity on data protection, consent and confidentiality – these are not reasons to withhold relevant information.
Less focus on sharing for emerging needs.	Emphasis on sharing information early to identify needs, prevent harm and promote welfare (as well as protecting from harm).

What must organisations do?



- Share information with another relevant organisation or the requestor if it may help them exercise their functions (e.g. assess need or risk, make a decision, provide support or take action).
- Consider sharing information about others connected to a child where relevant.
- Use professional judgement and follow local protocols.
- Only withhold information in the very limited circumstance where sharing would be more detrimental to the child than not sharing.

What hasn't changed?



- Data protection law still applies – it supports information sharing for safeguarding.
- Consent remains important but is not always required, particularly where it may put a child at risk.
- The common law duty of confidentiality and the right to respect for private and family life still apply, but these are not absolute barriers to sharing.
- This guidance should be read alongside existing safeguarding frameworks, including Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026 and Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026.

Remember...



- Be curious. Consider what information you hold and why it might be relevant.
- Share proportionately, accurately, securely and in a timely way.
- Record your decisions and the rationale for sharing (or not sharing).
- Seek advice if you are unsure.

Our shared aim



By sharing the right information, at the right time, we can work together to safeguard children, prevent harm and support better outcomes.

Information sharing saves lives.

Right information | Right people | Right time | Safer children







Working Together

To improve levels of Severe Absence in Bradford

City of BRADFORD METROPOLITAN DISTRICT COUNCIL

CHILDREN | FAMILIES | THRIVING COMMUNITIES

City of BRADFORD METROPOLITAN DISTRICT COUNCIL

Attendance Network: Severe Absence Workshop

"Reducing Severe Absence Together: *Moving from Understanding to Action*"

Stronger Schools Brighter Bradford



Why are we here?

Severe absence remains a significant challenge in Bradford.

- Severe absence remains one of Bradford's biggest attendance challenges, particularly in our secondary schools.
- Schools and partners are seeing increasing complexity in the needs of severely absent pupils and their families.
- No single service, school or intervention can solve severe absence alone.
- Today's session is an opportunity to share expertise and shape Bradford's future approach together.

What are we trying to achieve?

By the end of this session we will:

- Understand the biggest barriers to reducing severe absence.
- Identify practice that is already working.
- Explore what schools need from Bradford.
- Develop shared priorities for 2026/27.

Your contribution matters

Today's discussions will inform:

- Bradford's Severe Absence Strategy for 2026/27.
- Future attendance priorities.
- Multi-agency working arrangements.
- Support available to schools.
- School commitments for the next academic year.



Key message

This is not a consultation on a finished strategy.

We are developing Bradford's Severe Absence Strategy together and want to ensure the experiences, expertise and ideas of schools directly shape our approach.

Attendance remains everybody's business.

BRADFORD ATTENDANCE NETWORK

BRADFORD 2025 UK City of Culture

CHILDREN | FAMILIES | THRIVING COMMUNITIES

City of BRADFORD METROPOLITAN DISTRICT COUNCIL

Stronger Schools Brighter Bradford

2 Severe Absence in Bradford:
Why it remains our biggest challenge



The Current Picture
Severe absence remains our biggest attendance concern.

- Around **2,000 – 2,500** pupils in Bradford are expected to be persistently absent this year (primary and secondary).
- Approximately **1,500 – 1,600** secondary pupils are expected to be severely absent (below 50% attendance).
- Severe absence in secondary schools remains higher than national averages.
- The cohort is complex, with multiple and overlapping barriers to attendance.

Why it matters
Severe absence can have a significant and lasting impact.

- Reduced academic achievement and future opportunities.
- Increased risk of social isolation, poor mental health and reduced wellbeing.
- Higher risk of exclusion and disengagement from education, employment and training.
- More likely to become a long-term issue without sustained support.

Our shared responsibility
Reducing severe absence requires a collective approach.

- Schools, families, Bradford Council and our partners all have a vital role to play.
- It cannot be solved by one service, one intervention or one individual.
- We need consistent, coordinated and sustained action over the next 12 months.
- Every severely absent child matters and can be supported back into education.

Key message

Severe absence is one of our greatest challenges, but it is not insurmountable.
By working together, we can make a real difference for the children and young people of Bradford.

BRADFORD ATTENDANCE NETWORK

Attendance remains everybody's business.

BRADFORD 2025 UK City of Culture

City of BRADFORD METROPOLITAN DISTRICT COUNCIL

Stronger Schools Brighter Bradford

3 What is driving severe absence in your setting?

Let's start with your experience.

SEND Needs
Unmet needs, waiting lists and lack of appropriate support.

Anxiety / EBSA
Emotionally based school avoidance and increased anxiety.

Mental Health
Poor mental health and emotional wellbeing.

Family Circumstances
Family breakdown, parenting pressures, poverty and wider family needs.



Shared insight • Shared responsibility
Stronger outcomes

School Relationships
Belonging, engagement and positive relationships with staff and peers.

Exclusions / Behaviour
Suspensions, permanent exclusion and behaviour related absence.

Safeguarding Concerns
Unmet safeguarding needs and involvement from other services.

Other
Is there another key factor in your setting?

Key message

There is unlikely to be a single answer.
Understanding the drivers is our first step towards developing effective solutions.

Attendance remains everybody's business.

BRADFORD 2025 UK City of Culture

Our Proposed Secondary Severe Absence Approach

Sustained oversight, targeted intervention and shared accountability for the children at greatest risk of becoming detached from education

SECONDARY SEVERE ABSENCE

A sustained 12-month approach

A Defined Cohort
- Prioritised secondary pupils
- Clear entry criteria
- Year-long oversight

Named Ownership
- Allocated Attendance Support Officer
- Clear case responsibility
- Regular review and tracking

Child and Family Engagement
- Understand the barriers
- Direct family work
- Home visits and relationship building

School Accountability
- Strong attendance planning
- Leadership oversight
- Timely action and review

Multi-Agency Intervention
- SEND, Early Help and Family Hubs
- Safeguarding and partner involvement
- Coordinated support around the child

Performance and Impact
- Track attendance improvement
- Measure engagement and outcomes
- Learn what works

This is our proposed operating model. Today's discussion will help us challenge, strengthen and refine the approach.

BRADFORD 2025
UK City of Culture

How the Approach Will Work in Practice

A sustained cycle of understanding, planning, intervention and review around each child



1 Identify and Prioritise

- Confirm the severe absence cohort
- Review available evidence
- Identify immediate risks

2 Understand the Child

- Hear the child's voice
- Understand the family context
- Explore SEND and safeguarding barriers

3 Agree the Plan

- Set clear attendance goals
- Define responsibilities
- Agree support and review points

4 Act and Engage

- Direct work with the family
- Home visits and practical support
- Support and challenge the school

5 Coordinate Support

- Bring relevant partners together
- Remove duplication and gaps
- Escalate where progress is limited

6 Review and Adapt

- Track attendance and engagement
- Review the plan regularly
- Change the response when needed

What will be different?

- 12-month oversight, not a short intervention
- Named ownership for each child
- Support and challenge around the whole system
- Success measured through sustained improvement

The aim is not simply to monitor absence. It is to understand what is **preventing attendance** and **coordinate the action needed to change it.**

Bradford Council

Severe Absence Prioritisation Framework

Right child | Right support | Right time

Working together to understand barriers, re-engage children and prevent them becoming lost from education.

What informs the decision?

We use a combination of data, intelligence and professional judgement – not attendance alone.

Attendance data + School intelligence + Safeguarding information + Existing interventions + Vulnerability & wider needs + Professional judgement

Our aim

Identify the right response, not just rank the numbers.

RED

Needs us sooner

Immediate priority

High risk of becoming, or already, lost from education. Cannot wait for routine review cycles.

May include:

- 0% attendance
- Attendance has collapsed
- Effectively left education
- Repeated failed interventions
- Significant safeguarding concerns
- Previous exclusions / prosecution with no impact

Our direction:

- Escalate quickly
- Multi-agency focus
- Consider home visits / direct engagement
- Agree immediate plan and accountability
- Do not wait for 12-week review

AMBER

Need to understand the story

Priority investigation

Complex barriers or unmet need. Map the story and coordinate the response before deciding intervention.

May include:

- Severe absence over 2+ years
- SEND / SEMH / MNHES
- Child in Need / Social Care
- Early Help involvement
- Deprivation factors
- Complex family circumstances
- Existing support with limited impact

Our direction:

- Build a clear picture of barriers
- Map all agency involvement
- Agree ownership and actions
- Prioritise relationship building and engagement
- Move to Red if risk escalates
- Move to Blue if stabilises

BLUE

Watch, review, then decide

Active monitoring

Emerging or improving picture. Monitor closely to prevent escalation.

May include:

- Severe absence last year only
- Year 7 entrants
- Recent school move
- Emerging concern
- Attendance is improving
- New admissions

Our direction:

- Monitor actively
- Do not allow cases to drift
- Review at end of Term 1
- Escalate if attendance worsens or risks emerge
- De-escalate only when sustained improvement is evidenced

Children can move between categories

Categories are fluid and reviewed regularly based on engagement, risk, attendance and professional judgement.

Key principles

Not purely attendance based.
Professional judgement is essential.

Safeguarding may increase priority.
Even where attendance percentage is higher.

Reviewed regularly.
Children can move between categories.

Schools are key partners.
Attendance leads, safeguarding leads and SLT involved in categorisation.

Focus on impact.
Right response, right support, right time.

The outcome

Re-engaged children, improved attendance and positive futures.

Understand ♥ Support ♥ Re-engage ♥ Prevent

BRADFORD 2025 UK City of Culture

CHILDREN | FAMILIES | THRIVING COMMUNITIES

4 Understanding the Problem

What is the biggest barrier to reducing severe absence?

City of BRADFORD METROPOLITAN DISTRICT COUNCIL

Stronger Schools Brighter Bradford

Child Factors

Individual needs and experiences that can impact on attendance.

- **SEND** — Additional needs and reasonable adjustments.
- **Anxiety** — Emotional anxiety, stress and EBSA.
- **Mental Health** — Poor mental health and emotional wellbeing.
- **School Avoidance** — Difficulty attending due to worries, fears or past experiences.

Family Factors

Family circumstances and environmental factors that can affect attendance.

- **Family Breakdown** — Separation, loss or changing family dynamics.
- **Parenting Pressures** — Parental mental health, capacity and competing demands.
- **Poverty** — Financial hardship and access to resources.
- **Transport Issues** — Lack of reliable or affordable transport.

School & System Factors

School-related and wider system factors that can contribute to severe absence.

- **Relationships** — Sense of belonging, positive relationships with staff and peers.
- **Exclusions** — Suspensions, permanent exclusions and behaviour-related absence.
- **Reintegration** — Challenges returning to school after absence or exclusion.
- **Access to Support** — Timely access to specialist services and multi-agency support.

Breakout activity

Discuss in groups:

1. What are the top three barriers to reducing severe absence in your setting?
2. Which barrier do you think schools cannot tackle alone?

Your experience and ideas are vital to shaping our approach.

Key message

Before we identify solutions, we need to understand the barriers.

By understanding the challenges, we can develop more effective, targeted and sustainable solutions to reduce severe absence across Bradford.

BRADFORD ATTENDANCE NETWORK

Attendance remains everybody's business.

Understanding the Problem - Attendance Network Meeting 29th September 2026

Understanding the Problem - Attendance Network Meeting 29th September 2026 – Fill out form

BRADFORD 2025 UK City of Culture

City of BRADFORD METROPOLITAN DISTRICT COUNCIL

Stronger Schools Brighter Bradford

5 What Are We Hearing Across Bradford?

Feedback from our discussions

Child Factors

Individual needs and experiences that can impact on attendance.

- SEND
- Anxiety / EBSA
- Mental Health
- School Avoidance

Family Factors

Family circumstances and environmental factors that can affect attendance.

- Family Breakdown
- Parenting Capacity
- Poverty
- Transport Issues

School & System Factors

School-related and wider system factors that can contribute to severe absence.

- Relationships
- Exclusions
- Reintegration
- Access to Support

Key Emerging Themes

1.
2.
3.
4.
5.

Which barriers are schools struggling to tackle alone?

Your insights help shape our next steps.

Key message | **Understanding the causes of severe absence** helps us build more effective and targeted solutions.

Attendance remains everybody's business.

BRADFORD 2025 UK City of Culture

CHILDREN | FAMILIES | THRIVING COMMUNITIES

City of BRADFORD METROPOLITAN DISTRICT COUNCIL

5 What Actually Works?

Learning from success stories across Bradford

Stronger Schools Brighter Bradford

Relationships Matter
Building trust, belonging and positive connections.

- **Trusted Adult** — A consistent, reliable adult who believes in the child.
- **Key Worker** — A named person to coordinate support and keep in touch.
- **Consistent Contact** — Regular, meaningful and persistent communication with the child and family.
- **Sense of Belonging** — Helping the child feel valued, included and part of the school community.

Effective Interventions
Tailored, timely and inclusive approaches.

- **Home Visits** — Rebuilding relationships, understanding barriers and engaging families.
- **Graduated Reintegration** — Flexible, individualised plans to build confidence and increase attendance.
- **Attendance Mentoring** — Targeted support to address barriers and build motivation.
- **Family Support** — Practical help, signposting and coordinated support for wider family needs.

Working Together
A shared and coordinated approach.

- **Family Hubs** — Access to early help, family support and wider services.
- **SEND Support** — Timely assessment, reasonable adjustments and specialist input.
- **Team Around the Family** — Bringing the right people together to plan and support.
- **Multi-Agency Planning** — Coordinated action across education, health, social care and other key partners.

Breakout activity
Discuss in groups:

1. Think of a severely absent pupil whose attendance improved.
2. What made the difference?
3. Why did it work?
4. Could it work elsewhere?

Share your examples and help us identify what works across Bradford.

Key message

Before building solutions, let's learn from what is already making a difference.

By sharing what works, we can build on existing good practice and ensure more severely absent children are supported back into education.

BRADFORD ATTENDANCE NETWORK

Attendance remains everybody's business.

Breakout Activity Two: What Actually Works - Attendance Network Meeting September 2026

Breakout Activity Two: What Actually Works - Attendance Network Meeting September 2026 – Fill out form

BRADFORD 2025 UK City of Culture

City of BRADFORD METROPOLITAN DISTRICT COUNCIL

Stronger Schools Brighter Bradford

6 What Works Across Bradford?

Feedback from schools: what made the difference?

Relationships

Building trust, belonging and positive connections.

- Trusted Adult
- Key Worker
- Regular Contact
- Sense of Belonging

School Examples

-
-
-
-
-

Interventions

Tailored, timely and inclusive approaches.

- Home Visits
- Graduated Reintegration
- Attendance Mentoring
- Individual Support Plans

School Examples

-
-
-
-
-

Partnership Working

Stronger together for better outcomes.

- Family Hubs
- SEND Support
- Team Around the Family
- Multi-Agency Planning

School Examples

-
-
-
-
-

What themes are emerging across Bradford?

Key message

Good practice already exists across Bradford.
Our challenge is to identify it, share it and scale it.

Attendance remains everybody's business.

BRADFORD 2025 UK City of Culture

CHILDREN | FAMILIES | THRIVING COMMUNITIES

City of BRADFORD METROPOLITAN DISTRICT COUNCIL

8 Building Solutions Together

From understanding the challenge to shaping the response

Stronger Schools Brighter Bradford

What should Bradford do?

How can we best support schools to reduce severe absence?

- **Data & Information** — Clear, timely and useful intelligence
- **Support & Resources** — Practical support, training and advice
- **Partnerships** — Stronger multi-agency working
- **Guidance & Consistency** — Clear pathways and expectations

What should schools do?

What should every school be doing for severely absent pupils?

- **Leadership and Ownership** — A whole-school approach
- **Attendance Plans** — Personalised, focused and regularly reviewed
- **Family Engagement** — Proactive, persistent and supportive contact
- **Early Intervention** — Identify and act before absence becomes entrenched

Shared Priorities

Where should we work together to make the biggest difference?

- **Collaboration** — Joint working and shared responsibility
- **Accountability** — Clear roles, challenge and support
- **Inclusion** — Meeting the needs of all learners
- **Impact** — Measurable change for children and young people

What actions would have the greatest impact on reducing severe absence across Bradford?

Key message | The most effective solutions will be those that schools and Bradford develop **together**.

BRADFORD ATTENDANCE NETWORK

Attendance remains everybody's business.

BRADFORD 2025 UK City of Culture

CHILDREN | FAMILIES | THRIVING COMMUNITIES

City of BRADFORD METROPOLITAN DISTRICT COUNCIL

9 What Should Bradford Do?

What support would make the biggest difference to schools?

Stronger Schools Brighter Bradford

Data & Intelligence
Clear, timely and useful information.

- Attendance dashboards
- Cohort tracking and trends
- Early identification of risk
- Actionable insight
- Consistent data sharing

Multi-Agency Support
Joined up support for complex cases.

- Family Hubs
- Early Help / CBA
- SEND support
- Health partners
- Youth Justice Service
- Wider community services

Professional Challenge & Support
Collaboration, expertise and shared learning.

- Attendance surgeries
- Case consultation
- Networking and support
- Sharing effective practice
- Challenge and accountability
- Access to specialist advice

Guidance & Resources
Practical tools to support schools.

- Clear frameworks and pathways
- Training and CPD
- Practical toolkits and templates
- Reintegration guidance
- Examples of what works
- Signposting to support

What support would most help your school reduce severe absence?
Share your ideas, suggestions and priorities. All contributions are valuable.

-
-
-
-
-



Let's work together to find the solutions that make a difference.

Key message

Your feedback will directly inform Bradford's Severe Absence Strategy for 2026/27.

Together we can ensure that every child in Bradford has the opportunity to be in school and thrive.

BRADFORD ATTENDANCE NETWORK

Attendance remains everybody's business.

What should Bradford Council do?

What should Bradford Council do? – Fill out form

BRADFORD 2025 UK City of Culture

CHILDREN | FAMILIES | THRIVING COMMUNITIES

10 What Should Schools Do?

What should every Bradford school be doing for every severely absent pupil?

City of BRADFORD METROPOLITAN DISTRICT COUNCIL

Stronger Schools Brighter Bradford

Leadership & Ownership

Strong leadership drives change.

- **Named Lead** — Every severely absent pupil has a named member of staff.
- **Head of Year Involvement** — Active involvement in monitoring, support and family contact.
- **Senior Leadership Oversight** — Attendance is a standing item and leaders hold accountability.
- **Regular Reviews** — Progress is reviewed regularly and actions updated.

Attendance & Family Support

Relationships and support make a difference.

- **Attendance Plans** — Individual, tailored and outcome focused.
- **Family Meetings** — Early, proactive and consistent communication with families.
- **Home Visits** — Used where appropriate to build understanding and re-engage families.
- **Trusted Adults** — A consistent, positive adult who builds connection and encourages engagement.

Review & Reintegration

Ongoing support to sustain improvement.

- **Attendance Monitoring** — Regular tracking of attendance and impact of interventions.
- **SEND Support** — Ensure needs are identified and reasonable adjustments are in place.
- **Multi-Agency Referrals** — Escalate to wider services where additional support is needed.
- **Reintegration Planning** — Thoughtfull, phased and well-supported reintegration following absence or exclusion.

> *Every severely absent child matters. Let's work together to make a difference.*

What should be the minimum expectation for every severely absent pupil in Bradford?

Use the chat or Microsoft Form to share your ideas:

-
-
-
-
-
-

Key message

Reducing severe absence is everyone's responsibility.

Consistent expectations create better outcomes for children and families.

Attendance remains everybody's business.

BRADFORD ATTENDANCE NETWORK

What should be the minimum expectation for every severely absent pupil in Bradford?

What should be the minimum expectation for every severely absent pupil in Bradford? – Fill out form

BRADFORD 2025 UK City of Culture

City of BRADFORD METROPOLITAN DISTRICT COUNCIL

Stronger Schools Brighter Bradford

11 Thank You & Next Steps

How today's feedback will shape Bradford's Severe Absence Strategy

What We Heard

Key themes from today's discussions

Barriers
The main challenges preventing pupils from returning to school.

What Works
Examples of effective practice across Bradford.

Bradford Priorities
What support schools need from Bradford to make the biggest difference.

School Priorities
What schools will do to improve outcomes for severely absent pupils.

What Happens Next?

From discussion to delivery

1. **Analyse Feedback**
We will collate and analyse all feedback from today's session, identifying key themes and priorities.

2. **Draft Severe Absence Strategy**
Your feedback will shape the draft strategy for 2026/27.

3. **School Consultation & Refinement**
We will share the draft strategy with schools and partners for further feedback and development.

4. **Launch 2026/27 Approach**
Finalise and launch the Severe Absence Strategy, with clear implementation plans and support.

Stay Involved

There are more opportunities to shape our approach

Working Groups
Help develop and test key elements of the strategy.

Pilot Schools
Be part of testing new approaches and interventions.

Share Effective Practice
Tell us what is working in your setting so we can share across Bradford.

Ongoing Feedback and Collaboration
Stay involved through network meetings, surveys and future events.

Register Your Interest in Future Development Work

Scan the QR code to let us know how you'd like to be involved.

Your feedback today will directly influence Bradford's Severe Absence Strategy.

Together we can make a difference.

Key message

Thank you for helping shape a Bradford-wide approach to reducing severe absence.
Your insights, expertise and commitment are vital in ensuring every child in Bradford has the opportunity to be in school and thrive.

Attendance remains everybody's business.

BRADFORD 2025 UK City of Culture